

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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EXDIS

DEPT ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR PORTER

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SUBJECT: ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR SAUDI ARABIA: PART TWO

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ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR SAUDI ARABIA. THIS TELEGRAM

CONTAINS SECTION II. MAJOR U.S. INTERESTS IN SAUDI ARABIA

A. ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN SAUDI ARABIA.

THE UNITED STATES DESIRES THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA. CLOSER U.S. ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA CAN CONTRIBUTE TO STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMIES OF BOTH THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA.

1. PETROLEUM

PETROLEUM IS THE LYNCH PIN OF THE U.S.-SAUDI ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP. THE KINGDOM IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST EXPORTER OF PETROLEUM AND THOUGH CURRENTLY THE SECOND LARGEST PRODUCER, FOLLOWING THE SOVIET UNION, IT COULD BE THE LARGEST AS IT HAS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PROVEN OIL RESERVES. BOTH FACTS ARE OF STRATEGIC CONCERN TO THE U.S., THE WORLD'S LARGEST INDUSTRIALIZED STATE. EQUALLY CRITICAL TO U.S. GLOBAL POLICY INTERESTS IS THE ASSURED CONTINUANCE OF SAUDI PETROLEUM TO THE COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE AND JAPAN. RECENT DATA INDICATE THAT U.S. DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED PETROLEUM HAS REMAINED ABOUT THE SAME -- 35 PERCENT OF CONSUMPTION -- SINCE THE ARAB EMBARGO, BUT THAT THE U.S. IS NOW SOMEWHAT MORE DEPENDENT ON ARAB PETROLEUM. THE ORGANIZATION OF ARABIAN PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OAPEC) HAS INCREASED ITS SHARE OF THE U.S. IMPORT MARKET FROM 22 PERCENT IN 1973 TO 26 PERCENT IN THE FIRST PART OF 1975.

SAUDI ARABIAN AVERAGE PETROLEUM PRODUCTION, WHICH AMOUNTED TO 8.6 BILLION BARRELS DAILY (BBL/D) PRIOR TO THE 1973 ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, FELL TO 7.6 MILLION BBL/D IN 1973, RECOVERED TO 8.5 MILLION BBL/D DURING 1974 AND WAS AT 6.8 MILLION BBL/D DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 1975. PRODUCTION DURING AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1975 WAS CLOSE TO THE ARABIAN AMERICAN OIL COMPANY'S (ARAMCO) "ALLOWABLE" OF 8.5 MILLION BBL/D. IT WAS EXPECTED THAT PRODUCTION WOULD FALL DURING OCTOBER 1975, AS IT DID, AFTER THE WORLD-WIDE INVENTORY BUILDUP IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

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OF PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES' (OPEC) PRICE INCREASE ON OCTOBER 1. THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY WAS SURPRISED, HOWEVER, AT THE SIZE OF THE SAUDI CUT IN PRODUCTION: THE TOTAL DROPPED TO 5.9 MILLION BBL/D IN OCTOBER -- A DROP OF 2.5 MILLION BBL/D, NEARLY EQUAL TO IRAQ'S TOTAL PRODUCTION AND GREATER THAN VENEZUELA'S. ARAMCO IS THE ONLY BIG PRODUCER IN SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER INCREASING EXTERNAL PRESSURE TO REDUCE PRODUCTION. EXTERNAL FORCES

SEEK SAUDI CUTBACKS TO EASE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS OF SURPLUS SUPPLIES AND MAINTAINING HIGH PRICE LEVELS.

TOTAL SAUDI ARABIAN PRODUCTION FOR RECENT YEARS, IN THOUSANDS OF BARRELS PER ANNUM, HAS BEEN AS FOLLOWS:

YEAR	ARAMCO OIL	GETTY OIL	ARABAIN	TOTAL
1970	1,295	28.7	62.6	1,388
1971	1,642	33.7	65.3	1,741
1972	2,098	28.5	75.0	2,202
1973	2,677	23.5	71.9	2,773
1974	2,997	29.8	68.7	3,095

RECENT ESTIMATES FOR EXPANDING SAUDI CAPACITY HAVE BEEN SHARPLY DOWNGRADED, FROM A PROJECTED 16 MILLION BBL/D TO 13 MILLION BBL/D BY 1980. SAUDI ARABIA CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATES ITS "RECOVERABLE" CRUDE PETROLEUM RESERVES AT 164 BILLION BARRELS (COUBLE ENTIRE WESTERN HEMISPHERE RESERVES).

STILL ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR POLICY MAKERS IS WHETHER, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, SAUDI ARABIA WOULD RENEW THE EMBARGO WHICH IT IMPOSED DURING THE 1973 WAR (SEE DISCUSSION SECTION II.B.2. "SUPPORT OF U.S. PEACE INITIATIVE.").

2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

THE OBLVERSE OF SAUDI ARABIAN PETROLEUM EXPORTS IS SAUDI ARABIA'S MONETARY WEALTH, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE FOUR-FOLD INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF OIL. (NOW \$11.51 PER BBL.)

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SAUDI ARABIA'S PETROLEUM INCOME FROM HIGHER PRICES, TAXES, AND ROYALTIES, AND GOVERNMENT "PARTICIPATION" IN PRODUCTION HAS RISEN FROM \$1.2 BILLION IN 1970 TO \$4.3 BILLION IN 1973 AND TO TO \$22.6 BILLION IN 1974. PETROLEUM INCOME SHOULD AMOUNT TO AROUND \$27.6 BILLION IN 1975, CLEARLY MORE THAN THE SAUDIS CAN EFFICIENTLY HANDLE AT PRESENT, OR I THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

SAUDI ARABIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE HOLDINGS HAVE INCREASED CORRESPONDINGLY, APPROXIMATELY FROM \$1.0 BILLION IN 1970 TO \$5.0 BILLION IN 1973 TO \$9.0 BILLION IN 1974 AND AN ESTIMATED \$22.0 BILLION AT THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER 1975. THE SAUDI ARABIAN MONETARY AGENCY ALSO HOLDS LARGE AMOUNTS OF FOREIGN BONDS AND ESCHANGE ASSETS

WHICH, AS OF AUGUST 1975, TOTALED \$32 BILLION.

TOTAL SAUDI ARABIAN PETROLEUM INCOME AND FOREIGN
EXCHANGE RESERVES AS REPORTED BY THE SAUDI ARABIAN
MONETARY AGENCY (SAMA) IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ARE SHOWN
BELOW FOR RECENT YEARS. #

YEAR	PETROLEUM INCOME	FOREIGN EXCHANGE
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1970	\$ 1,214	\$ 815
1971	1,885	1,275
1972	2,745	2,103
1973	4,340	4,366
1974	22,574	11,150
1975	27,590	21,970

HIJRI CALENDAR YEAR APPROXIMATE.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT, IF SAUDI ARABIAN PETROLEUM
PRODUCTION IS HELD AT THE LOW LEVEL OF 6.5 MILLION BBL/D,
FOREIGN EXCHANGE RECEIPTS WOULD COME IN AT THE RATE OF
\$1.0 BILLION PER MONTH. WERE PRODUCTION HELD AT THE
HIGHER END OF THE SCALE, 8.5 BBL/D, EXCHANGE
RECEIPTS WOULD RUN AT THE RATE OF \$2.0 BILLION MONTHLY.
PAYMENTS MADE BY ARAMCO TO THE GOVERNMENT WERE RUNNING
AT JUST UNDER \$2.0 BILLION MONTHLY DURING JULY, AUGUST
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AND SEPTEMBER 1975. (THOSE FIGURES INCLUDED PAST ACCRUALS).

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AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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3. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT'S SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN WAS RELEASED IN OCTOBER 1975, PUBLISHED IN SUMMARY FORM BY THE U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT AND REPRINTED IN FULL BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE. THE PLAN ENVISAGES GROSS EXPENDITURES OF \$142 BILLION (1974-1975 PRICES), THOUGH EARLY 1980. MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN ARE:

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ECONOMIC RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT	\$ 26.2 BILLION
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	22.8
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	9.4
PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	32.1

\$ 90.5 BILLION

ADMINISTRATION	\$ 10.8 BILLION
DEFENSE	22.2
EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE	18.3

\$ 51.1 BILLION

GRAND TOTAL	\$142.0 BILLION
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IN ADDITION TO DEVELOPMENT SPENDING PLANS, GOVERNMENT BUDGETED EXPENDITURES INCREASED NEARLY PARI PASSU WITH PETROLEUM LARGESSE, RISING FROM \$4.7 BILLION IN 1973 TO \$16.6 BILLION IN 1974 AND AN ESTIMATED \$30.4 BILLION IN 1975. ACTUAL SPENDING HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN MUCH LOWER THAN AMOUNTS BUDGETED. SAMA FIGURES (GIVEN CONFIDENTIALLY TO THE IMF) XHOW THAT 1974 EXPENDITURES WERE ONLY 73 PERCENT OF BUDGETED AMOUNTS.

THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT FACES MOUTING PROBLEMS STETA MING FROM ITS OWN GOOD FORTUNE -- THE RAPID EXPENDITURE OF NEW WEALTH. TWO PROBLEMS ARE EMERGING WHICH, IN EXTREME, COULD IMPOSE STRAINS ON THE REGIME: INFLACTION AND CORRUPTION (SEE SECTION II.B.1 "INTERNAL STABILITY"). LARGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MOST ALWAYS TRIGGER CONSIDERABLE INFLATION BECAUSE THE SPENDING STREAM IS GENERATED BEFORE THE PRODUCT CAN BECOME AVAILABLE TO MEET INCREASING DEMAND. ONE WAY TO CURB INFLATIONARY PRESSURES IS TO EFFECT MASSIVE IMPORTS. SAUDI ARABIA IS ATTEMPTING THAT, AND HELP IS ON THE WAY, BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME TO CLEAR UP THE LOGJAM. MEANTIME, SAUDI ARABIA'S INADEQUATE PORT FACILITIES AND BUREACRATIC PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED. SHIPS (OVER 200) WAIT 3 TO 4 MONTHS FOR A TURN TO DISEMBARK CARGO AT
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JIDDA, WHILE SHIPMENTS ARRIVING B AIR AND OVERLAND FROM EUROPE PUSH THE COST OF CONSUMER GOODS AND CAPITAL EQUIPMENT FOR GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

THE SAUDI ECONOMIC IS HAVING TROUBLE. CONSTRUCTION COSTS ARE MOUNTING RAPIDLY, LABOR IS SCARCE AND FIRMS ARE PIRATING WORKERS FROM OTHER FIRMS. IN TWO YEARS COMMON CONSTRUCTION WORKERS HOURLY PAY HAS INCREASED 6-FOLD, THE PRICE OF BUILDING MATERIALS HAS TRIPLED OR QUADRUPLED. HOUSES WHICH RENTED FOR \$4,000 ANNUALLY TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO NOW COMMAND 10 TIMES MORE. THE CONTRACTOR FOR THE JIDDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, FOR EXAMPLE, SHOULD HAVE BEEN POURING RUNWAYS IN THE SPRING OF 1975, BUT HAS NOT YET OBTAINED THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES AS OF JANUARY 1976. CEMENT SHORTAGES HAVE HANDICAPPED CONSTRUCTION EFFORTS.

ADMINISTRATIVE INDECISION AND INABILITY TO ASSESS COMPLICATED JOINT VENTURE PROPOSALS HAVE SLOWED DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES OF JUBAYL AND YENBO. A ROYAL COMMISSION CREATED TO OVERSEE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN JUBAYL AND YENBO HAS YET TO DEMONSTRATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PETROCHEMICAL INVESTMENT WAS TRANSFERRED IN OCTOBER TO THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY. THIS REDUCED THE AUTHORITY AND INFLUENCE OF PETROMIN AND THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND INCREASED PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION FOR THE SAG AND U.S. BUSINESSMEN.

THE SAUDI REGIME FACES A PROBLEM -- THAT MAY BECOME A DANGER -- BECAUSE OF SHORTFALL ON PERFORMANCE AND UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS. A MORE IMMEDIATE LIKELIHOOD IS THAT THE THIN LINE OF BUREAUCRATIC EXPERTISE WILL SIMPLY BE ENGULFED BY THE MOUNTING PROBLEMS. MORE THAN EVER, THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT, AND EVEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, FACED BY AN AVALANCHE OF MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS, NEED FOREIGN CONSULTANTS AND ADVISORS WHOM THEY CAN TRUST. AT PRESENT, THESE POSITIONS FOR THE MOST PART ARE FILLED BY DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ADVISORS SUBSERVIENT TO THE WHIMS OF THEIR MASTERS.

4. TRADE AND INVESTMENT

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THE VAST EXPENDITURES CONTEMPLATED UNDER THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN OFFER FORMIDABLE COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR AMERICAN FIRMS FOR THE SALE OF GOODS, SERVICES AND MANAGEMENT, AS WELL AS INVESTMENT. SAUDI ARABIA PROJECTS AN EXPENDITURE OF \$50 BILLION SOLELY ON AN ARRAY OF SEMI-PUBLIC JOINT VENTURES IN THE PETROCHEMICAL AND RELATED FIELDS AND IN THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF NATURAL GAS. THE LATTER, PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH PETROLEUM, IS NOW LARGELY WASTED. THE GOVERNMENT ALSO PLANS MASSIVE EXPENDITURES IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT, WATER AND DESALINATION, HEALTH CARE, ELECTRICITY AND LONG NEGLECTED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS.

THE SAUDI "BOOM" IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE, AT LEAST THROUGH 1980. IMPORTS INTO SAUDI ARABIA HAVE BEEN INCREASING ON THE ORDER OF 100 PERCENT A YEAR AND REACHED \$4.0 BILLION IN 1974. PAST SAUDI PREFERENCE FOR U.S. PRODUCTS STILL SLIGHTLY GIVES THE U.S. AN ADVANTAGE IN THE MARKET AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE AT LEAST TO MAINTAIN OUR SHARE, PROVIDED OBSTACLES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ARAB BOYCOTT (MENTIONED IN THE OVERVIEW) DO NOT JEOPARDIZE OUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS. THE DRIVE, HOWEVER, OF THE WESTERN COUNTRIES AND JAPAN TO RECAPTURE INCREASED OIL EXPENDITURE FUNDS WILL REQUIRE UNFLAGGING COMMERCIAL EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES. THE SAUDI CIVILIAN MARKET CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED ANY LONGER.

AS SAUDI ARABIA LOOKS TO ITS SECURITY INTERESTS IN

THE REGION, MILITARY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WILL OFFER MANY COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. FIRMS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS PURCHASED OVER \$6 BILLION IN ARMS AND MILITARY SERVICES IN RECENT YEARS, PERHAPS MORE THAN ONE-HALF FROM THE U.S. THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS IS CURRENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER PROJECTS IN EXCESS OF \$16 BILLION.

THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS ESTIMATES OF THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE U.S. ECONOMY MIGHT PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THE TOTAL SAUDI DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. A FIGURE OF \$4 TO \$5 BILLION IN EXPORTS ANNUALLY FOR THE NEXT FIVE TO SIX
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YEARS WOULD NOT WEEM UNREASONABLE, ALL OTHER FACTORS REMAINING THE SAME. COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS FOR THE U.S. FIRMS IN THIRD COUNTRIES WHICH ARE SAUDI AID RECIPIENTS, ARE ALSO ENCOURAGING.

5. THE PRODUCER-CONSUMER DIALOGUE

THE OUTLOOK FOR ACCOMMODATION AMONG THE PETROLEUM PRODUCING AND CONSUMING STATES IS NOW MUCH BRIGHTER. CONSUMER APPARENTLY HAVE BECOME INURED TO HIGHER GASOLINE PRICES AND THE MEMORIES OF THE 1973 BOYCOTT HAVE FADED SOMEWHAT. BUT THE ORGANIZATION OF PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC) RETAINS ENORMOUS POWER FOR COORDINATED ACTION AGAINST THE WESTERN ALLIANCE AND JAPAN, SHOULD THAT CONTINGENCY ARISE. TWO DEVELOPMENTS AUGUR WELL FOR A CONTINUED CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE -- SO IMPORTANT TO US -- THE DECISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA) TO RECOMMEND THE ADOPTION OF "MINIMUM SAFEGUARD PRICE" OF \$7.00 PER BARREL FOR IMPORTED PETROLEUM, AND THE "SUCCESSFUL" FIRST MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CIEC) DURING DECEMBER 1975.

SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE CIEC'S COMMISSION ON ENERGY. BOTH ARE MEMBERS OF THE FINANCIAL COMMISSION. BECAUSE OF THE SPOTLIGHT ON INTERNATIONAL FORA, THE POSSIBILITIES FOR CONFRONTATION MIGHT BE INCREASED AS ISSUES ARE HANDLED IN PUBLIC. SAUDI ARABIA, HOWEVER, HAS CONSISTENTLY EXERCISED A MODERATING INFLUENCE WITHIN OPEC, LARGELY BECAUSE OF ITS COMMITMENT TO THE STABILITY OF THE WESTERN ALLIANCE.
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